



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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OHIO MAN CHARGED IN 38-COUNT INDICTMENT WITH MONEY LAUNDERING AND ILLEGALLY TRANSFERRING FUNDS TO IRAN

-- Indictment alleges use of "Hawala" and foreign bank accounts to illegally move funds to Iran --

CLEVELAND, OHIO – Gregory A. White, the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, Brian M. Moskowitz, the Special Agent-in-Charge for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Detroit, and Vincent C. Williams, the Special Agent-in-Charge for the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigative Division (IRS-CI) in Cleveland, announced that a 38-count indictment was filed late yesterday against **Mohammad Anvari-Hamedani**, age 70, of 1316 West Ridge Drive, Fostoria, Ohio.

The defendant is charged with 23 counts of violating the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), Title 50, U.S.C., Section 1702, by sending funds to Iran. Pursuant to IEEPA, President William J. Clinton signed Executive Orders prohibiting any new investments in Iran, by a United States person. The indictment alleges that the defendant exported and caused to be exported to Iran more than \$1 million. A violation of IEEPA carries a potential penalty of a \$250,000 fine, 10 years imprisonment, or both.

The defendant is further charged with 8 counts of money laundering in violation of Title 18, U.S.C., Section 1956. Those charges allege that the defendant's exportation of funds from the United States to Iran was done to promote the IEEPA violations. The money laundering charges each carry a potential penalty of a \$500,000 fine, 20 years imprisonment, or both.

Mr. Anvari-Hamedani is also charged in 4 counts with filing false tax returns in violation of Title 26, U.S.C., Section 7206, by failing to disclose foreign accounts and foreign interest income he had. These charges carry a potential penalty of a \$250,000 fine, 3 years imprisonment, or both. Finally, the defendant is charged in 3 counts with failing to file Foreign Bank Account Reports in violation of Title 31, U.S.C., Section 5314. These charges carry a potential penalty of a \$250,000 fine, 5 years imprisonment, or both.

ICE Special Agent-in-Charge Moskowitz stated, "This is a serious violation of U.S. export laws and those who ignore American economic sanctions against countries such as Iran will be prosecuted. ICE will continue to use its expertise and authority to 'follow the money' whether it is here in the United States or around the world – as we work with our partners to bring these individuals to justice."

IRS-CI Special Agent-in-Charge Williams stated, “When an individual launders money, conceals their ownership in foreign bank accounts from the IRS, and does not report over \$750,000 in interest income generated by those hidden accounts, it becomes easy to see why IRS-CI calls money laundering tax evasion in progress. IRS-CI has the financial investigators and expertise that are critical to locating the money and prosecuting individuals that commit financial crimes both in this country and abroad. We are proud to be part of the team that brought this to justice.”

U.S. Attorney White stated, “This extremely important prosecution is another excellent example of the results that can occur when individual agencies work hand-in-hand to investigate and prosecute significant violations of federal laws.”

The actual sentence in this case, upon conviction, may be determined by the Court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which depend upon a number of factors unique to each case, including the defendant’s prior criminal record, if any; the defendant’s role in the offense; and the unique characteristics of the violation. In all cases the sentence will not exceed the statutory maximum and in most cases it will be less than the maximum.

The investigating agencies in this case are U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigative Division from the Department of Treasury. The case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas A. Karol.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. The burden of proof is always on the government to prove a defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.